

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Division for Human Capital Leadership & Merit System Accountability
Classification Appeals Program

San Francisco Field Services Group
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105-0001

Job Grading Appeal Decision
Under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Name of appellant]

Agency classification: Motor Vehicle Operator
WG-5703-6

Organization: [Appellant's organization/location]

OPM decision: Motor Vehicle Operator
WG-5703-6

OPM decision number: C-5703-06-05

/s/ Robert D. Hendler

Robert D. Hendler
Classification and Pay Claims
Program Manager

November 18, 2005

Date

As provided in section S7-8 of the Operating Manual, Federal Wage System, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in section 532.705(f) of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (address provided in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section H).

As indicated in this decision, our findings show that the appellant's official job description does not meet the standard of adequacy described in *Federal Wage System-Appropriated Fund Operating Manual, Subchapter S6-6.d*. Since job descriptions must meet the standard of adequacy, the agency must revise the appellant's job description to reflect our findings. The servicing human resources office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected job description within 30 days of the date of this decision to the San Francisco Field Services Group.

Decision sent to:

[Name and address of appellant]

[Address of servicing human resources office]
Department of the Air Force

Director of Civilian Personnel
HQ USAF/DPCC
Department of the Air Force
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1040

Chief, Civilian Policy and Design Division
HQ USAF/DPXC
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Chief, Classification Appeals
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Introduction

On June 30, 2005, the San Francisco Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a job grading appeal from [name of appellant]. On July 22, 2005, we received the agency's administrative report. The appellant's job is currently graded as Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703-6, but he believes it should be upgraded to grade 7. The appellant works in the [name and location of appellant's organization] We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5346 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

This decision is based on a thorough review of all information submitted by the appellant and his agency. In addition, to help decide the appeal we conducted separate telephone interviews with the appellant and his immediate supervisor.

General issues

One of the reasons that the appellant believes his job should be higher graded is that he is required to maintain a [name of State] B driver's license with passenger endorsement, and he is certified to train passenger and tractor trailer drivers. Trades and labor jobs are graded considering the actual skill, knowledge, and other requirements of the work performed. Our job grading decision must be based solely upon a comparison between the actual duties and responsibilities of the job and the appropriate job grading standards (5 U.S.C. 5346). Therefore, the requirement that employees be licensed or certified to perform work cannot affect the grades of their jobs (section II.C.2.d of the Job Grading System, Part I).

Although both the appellant and his supervisor have certified to the accuracy of the appellant's official job description (JD), Air Force Standard Core Personnel Document (CPD) [number], our findings disclosed that it is not completely accurate. We noted that the gross vehicle weight of the motor vehicles the appellant drives on a regular and recurring basis (excluding buses) ranges from 10,000 to 26,000 pounds, rather than from 26,000 to 32,000 pounds. In addition, he does not regularly drive van trucks, trash/garbage trucks, or dump trucks. Therefore, the agency must revise the JD to reflect our findings addressed in this decision.

Job information

The appellant drives several types of vehicles on a regular and recurring basis including platform trucks, stake bed trucks, and a variety of passenger buses seating from 18 to 44 passengers. The gross vehicle weight of the trucks ranges from 10,000 to 26,000 pounds, and most are equipped with air brakes. The appellant operates the trucks primarily on the base, while the buses are driven both on and off the installation. The buses are used to transport students to and from the [name of city] International Airport (approximately 70 miles round trip) who are attending six to eight week ordnance training on base which is offered throughout the year. The buses are also driven to provide tours of the base for visitors, shuttle visitors to their temporary quarters on base or to hotels in the [name of city] and take them to the airport, and to furnish regularly scheduled bus service on base using prescribed routes.

The results of our interviews and other material of record furnish more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities and how they are performed. Although not completely accurate, we incorporate the appellant's PD by reference into this decision.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency has allocated the appellant's job to the 5703 Motor Vehicle Operating occupation, titling it Motor Vehicle Operator, and the appellant does not disagree. We concur with the agency's title and occupational determination. The 5703 Job Grading Standard (JGS) contains appropriate grading criteria which we have applied below to the appellant's position.

Grade determination

The 5703 JGS uses four factors to determine the grade level of a job: *Skill and Knowledge, Responsibility, Physical Effort, and Working Conditions*. No single factor is considered by itself, but only in relation to its impact on the other factors. A job is placed in the grade that best represents the overall demands of the work. A factor level must be fully met before it may be credited.

The 5703 JGS notes that formerly such indicators as gross vehicle weight (GVW), load capacity, number of forward speeds, number of driving wheels, and passenger capacity have been routinely used as the primary criteria for determining grade levels of motor vehicle operator jobs. However, the JGS notes that these indicators are insufficient for determining the grade of the total job since they do not give consideration to all features of the job which affect the four grade determining factors listed above. However, GVW may provide a frame of reference from which to conduct a complete analysis and evaluation of a job. The JGS indicates that GVW is not directly applicable to passenger buses, passenger ambulance buses, or motor coaches.

An underlying premise of the JGS is that the vehicles described at each grade level are operated on government installations and on public roads in a full range of traffic conditions, and/or in installation environments that exhibit the same driving characteristics as public roads, on a regular and recurring basis. The JGS defines public road characteristics as widely dispersed urban and rural roadway systems, two-lane and four-lane highways, various weight limits and vehicle prohibition on certain roads or bridges, a range of driving speeds as well as highway speed limits on some roads; various traffic signals and multiple types of intersections, frequently heavy traffic congestion, and sharp curves and blind or steep hills.

Skill and Knowledge

Grade 6 motor vehicle operators operate one or more motor vehicles including platform trucks, van trucks, stake trucks, dump trucks, patient transport vehicles, passenger shuttle vans, and cargo vans that typically have a GVW of more than 10,000 pounds and up to 26,000 pounds. Some of them may be equipped with air brakes and power takeoff devices, and they operate them over Federal, state, county roads and city streets, sometimes on uneven terrain and through congested areas. The vehicles operated may be equipped with a power take off device for

transferring engine power to special-purpose accessory equipment, such as winches, power lifts, and plows.

Grade 6 operators must make judgments relative to the vehicle concerning loading and arranging cargo, overhead and side clearances, the turning radius, braking distance, and distance to be maintained from other vehicles. They must be selective in determining which routes to take because of the size and weight of the vehicle and the laws restricting the use of some roads by the types or size of vehicles driven. Drivers of passenger shuttle vans know the route and time schedule to follow, and have skill in maneuvering and braking the vehicle to avoid jostling the passengers. They have the ability to deal effectively with people in a hospitable manner. Also, they have skill in selecting alternate routes to avoid heavy traffic or other delaying conditions, and skills in map reading in order to reach unfamiliar locations.

Grade 7 level drivers operate one or more motor vehicles including platform, van and stake trucks, dump trucks, fuel trucks, and trash removal trucks, that have a gross vehicle weight of more than 26,000 pounds and up to 32,000 pounds, and passenger buses or passenger ambulance buses regardless of GVW. All of these vehicles are usually equipped with air brakes. They are operated over public roads (or the equivalent) at highway speeds to transport passengers, patients, supplies, materials, or equipment and tools or to tow equipment throughout rural or urban areas. Vehicles operated at grade 7 are driven over rough terrain, in close quarters, and in heavy traffic on both long and short hauls. Some drivers at this grade level operate a variety of passenger buses on scheduled or special runs from one location to another. Scheduled runs include work runs and shuttle runs, and special runs include touring trips to such locations as historic sites and recreation facilities. They are required to maneuver the bus around sharp corners and through narrow streets and roadways.

Grade 7 drivers know how to operate vehicles that are larger and longer than those driven by lower graded drivers. The vehicles they operate usually have air brakes and are more susceptible to sliding and tipping. They are difficult to maneuver, particularly when turning and backing. Drivers have skill and knowledge to operate these vehicles over a variety of roads, including interstate highways, narrow country roads, and on steep winding grades. Also, because of the size and weight of these vehicles, drivers are knowledgeable about which routes may be legally driven and the overpass clearances and other restrictions on such routes. Drivers of passenger buses at this grade level have knowledge of safe braking distances because of the weight and size of the bus and the added weight of the passengers. They also know when mechanical or operational problems indicate that the bus is unsafe to drive and should be recovered by a tow vehicle.

The appellant's job meets the grade 6 level. Like grade 6 drivers, the vehicles he operates on a regular and recurring basis include stake bed trucks and platform trucks having a GVW up to 26,000 pounds, and equipped with air brakes and power takeoff devices. He operates them both on and off the installation, driving over Federal, state, and county roads (sometimes over uneven terrain and through congested areas) in a variety of traffic conditions. In operating the vehicles, he uses judgment concerning the loading and arranging of cargo, vehicle clearances, turning radius, and braking distance. Based on the size and weight of a particular vehicle, he determines

the appropriate route, especially considering legal restrictions on GVW for operation on certain roads.

The appellant notes that he operates a platform vehicle retriever weighing in excess of 26,000 pounds. However, this is not done on a regular and recurring basis, and the record shows that over the past eleven months he used it only on an emergency basis when assigned to retrieve a disabled vehicle. He also occasionally drives a forklift when the primary operator is not available, but again this is not done on a regular and recurring basis.

The appellant's job does not fully meet the grade 7 level. In contrast to grade 7, he does not drive the heavier, wider, and longer trucks and specialized vehicles (e.g., refueling, garbage trucks) found at that level under the conditions described. However, the record shows that on a regular and recurring basis the appellant drives several types of buses accommodating between 18 and 44 passengers. As previously noted, these are used for special runs to transport students to and from the [name of city] International Airport, to pickup and deliver base visitors and provide tours of the installation, shuttle visitors to their temporary quarters, and provide regularly scheduled bus service on the facility. The buses are driven on both base and public roads, sometimes at highway speeds. However, in operating the buses the appellant is not faced with the driving conditions and variety of types of roads typical of grade 7. The roads on base used for bus driving are two-lane, paved and flat surfaces located in a rural setting, so that the appellant is not faced with maneuvering buses around sharp corners and through narrow streets and roadways. Even on his occasional trips to [name of city], he has not dealt with such conditions. Unlike grade 7 he does not operate the buses on rough terrain or in heavy traffic. Although he drives the buses on some state highways, and one interstate highway for trips to the airport, he does not operate the buses on narrow country roads, and there is a complete absence of roads having steep winding grades.

Responsibility

Grade 6 drivers receive instructions from the dispatcher or supervisor as to the type of vehicle to be operated, destination, cargo, passengers or patients to be transported, deadlines to be met, and any special information important to the mission. At the grade 6 level the driving proficiency is assessed in terms of safe and expeditious completion of the assigned job. The driver is responsible for selecting routes and obeying all traffic laws and regulations, as well as the safe loading and unloading of the vehicle. Performance of preventive maintenance tasks and preparation of trip tickets are reviewed for adequacy and compliance with instructions.

At grade 7, motor vehicle operator responsibilities are similar to those described at the 6 level with the addition that some drivers determine the route to be followed, taking into consideration such factors as the clearance of underpasses, overhead power lines, weight limitations, highway restrictions, and alternate bypass routes. Other drivers who are assigned prescribed routes for such trips as work runs, shuttle runs, or medical transportation runs are responsible for knowing acceptable alternative routes for use in emergency situations which will legally accommodate the size and length of the vehicle being driven. Because passenger buses are larger and longer and able to carry more people than vehicles at the grade 6 level, drivers of such buses must use expert judgment in making wide turns, braking, and backing and turning the bus around

competently and safely. These drivers maneuver the buses in difficult traffic and in a variety of constricted locations while maintaining time schedules. Grade 7 drivers accomplish their assignments with considerable independence, and their work is evaluated in terms of timeliness and driving competence.

The appellant's responsibility equates to the grade 6 level. Like the grade 6 level, the appellant receives instructions from the dispatcher or supervisor on the type of vehicle to be operated, destination, cargo, passengers to be transported, deadlines to be met, and any special instructions. He is responsible for selecting routes, obeying traffic laws, and the safe loading and unloading of vehicles. Comparable to grade 6, his work is assessed in terms of the safe and expeditious completion of the assigned job.

The exercise of grade 7 level responsibility is predicated upon performing work that also requires the exercise of grade 7 level skill and knowledge. Unlike the grade 7 level, because of the smaller size and weight of the trucks the appellant drives he does not have to consider the clearance factors noted at the higher level, or for prescribed routes be familiar with alternative routes in emergency situations. While he does drive buses typical of grade 7 level work, and must know how to turn, brake and back the vehicle, because of the rural setting of the base and the types of its roads, the appellant is not faced on a regular and recurring basis with maneuvering buses in difficult or congested traffic, and in a variety of constricted locations while maintaining time schedules required for the crediting of grade 7 level responsibility.

Physical Effort

At the grade 6 level, additional effort is needed to maneuver the longer and heavier vehicles, especially when backing these vehicles. Ambulance or patient transport vehicle drivers may be required to assist patients into and out of the vehicle, which involves physical exertion and frequent stooping and bending.

In addition to the physical effort required at the grade 6 level, drivers at grade 7 exert moderate physical effort in operating, turning, backing, and controlling vehicles which carry heavier loads or larger numbers of people than vehicles at the grade 6 level.

The appellant's job meets the grade 7 level. Because of the size and length of the buses, and number of passengers they can accommodate, he exerts moderate physical effort to operate, turn, and control the vehicles.

Working Conditions

The working conditions are the same as those described at the grade 5 level in the JGS, which discusses drivers operating vehicles in all types of traffic and weather on public roads. Because the appellant's working conditions fully meet the grade 5 level, and the standard does not specify different working conditions at the higher levels, this factor has no grade level impact.

Summary

We have evaluated the appellant's *Skill and Knowledge* and *Responsibility* at the grade 6 level, and his *Physical Effort* at grade 7. As indicated above, the factor for *Working Conditions* meets the grade 5 level and has no impact on the grade of the job. Because the final grade level for vehicle operating jobs is based on a thorough consideration of the four grading factors of the total job, the appellant's job must be graded at the 6 level because it fails to fully meet the whole job requirement of grade 7 level work.

Decision

The appealed job is properly graded as Motor Vehicle Operator, WG-5703-6.